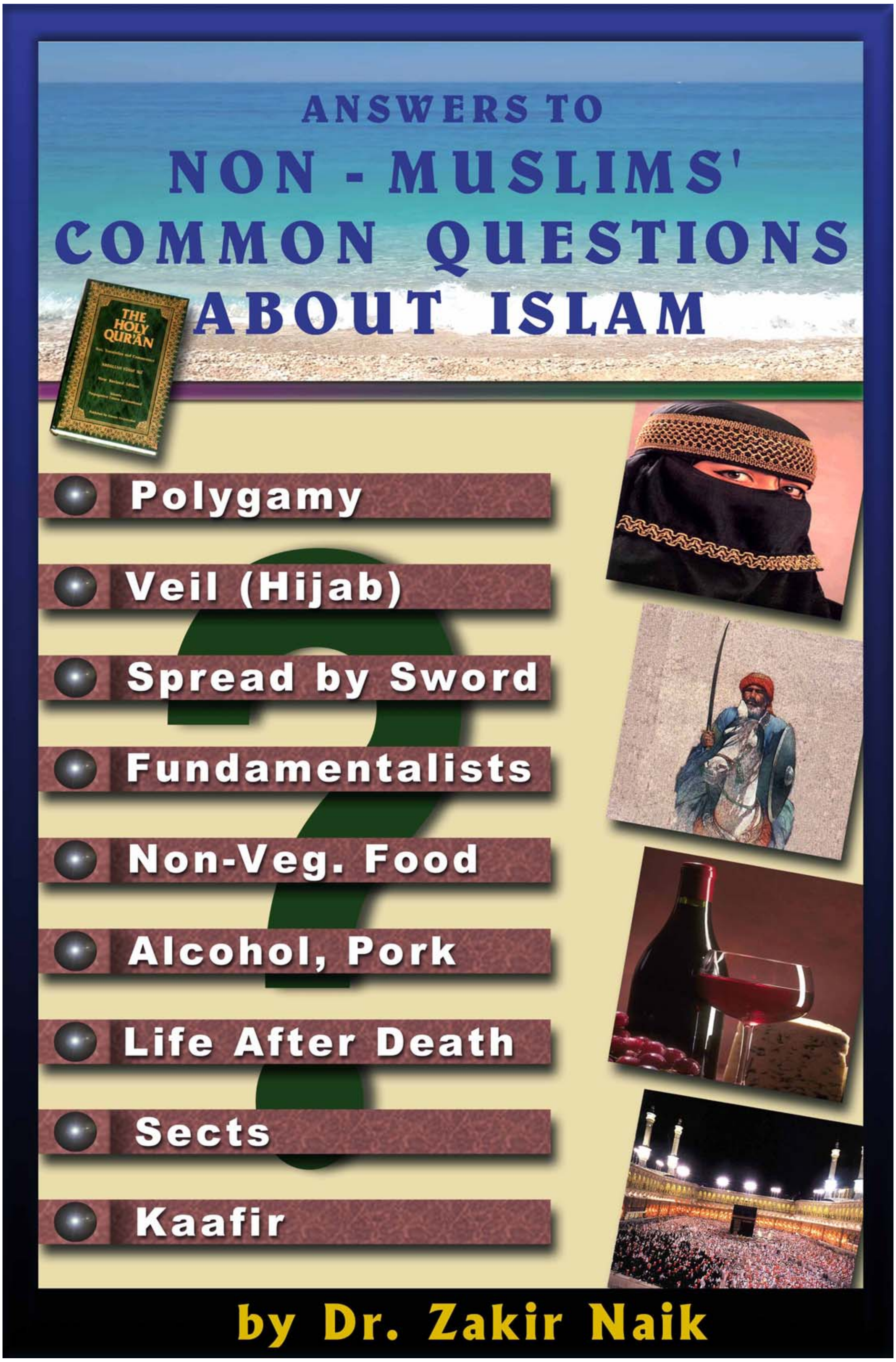

ANSWERS TO NON - MUSLIMS' COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM

- Polygamy
- Veil (Hijab)
- Spread by Sword
- Fundamentalists
- Non-Veg. Food
- Alcohol, Pork
- Life After Death
- Sects
- Kaafir

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INTRODUCTION

Da'wah is a duty

Most Muslims know that Islam is a universal religion, meant for all mankind. Allah (swt) is the Lord of the entire Universe, and Muslims have been entrusted with the duty of conveying His message to all mankind. Alas, most Muslims today have become callous towards this duty! While accepting Islam as the best way of life for ourselves, most of us are unwilling to share this knowledge with those to whom the message has not yet been conveyed.

The Arabic word Da'wah means a call or an invitation. In Islamic context, it means to strive for the propagation of Islam.

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Ah! Who is more unjust than those who conceal the testimony they have from Allah? But Allah is not unmindful of what ye do!"

[Al-Qur'an 2:140]

Twenty Most Common Questions

In order to convey the message of Islam, dialogue and debate become inevitable. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord, with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious!"

[Al-Qur'an 16:125]

In conveying the message of Islam to a non-Muslim, it is usually not sufficient to highlight only the positive nature of Islam. Most non-Muslims are not convinced about the truth of Islam because there are a few questions about Islam at the back of their minds that remain unanswered.

They may agree with your contentions about the positive nature of Islam. But, in the same breath, they will say - "Ah! But you are the same Muslims who marry more than one woman. You are the same people who subjugate women by keeping them behind the veil. You are fundamentalists, etc."

I personally prefer asking the non-Muslims upfront, with their limited knowledge, whether right or wrong, from whichever source it may be, what they feel is wrong in Islam. I encourage them to be very frank and open and convince them that I can take criticism about Islam.

In the past few years of my Da'wah experience, I have realized that there are barely twenty most common questions that a common non-Muslim has regarding Islam. Whenever you ask a non-Muslim, "what do you feel is wrong in Islam?", he poses five or six questions, and these questions invariably fall among the twenty most common questions.

Logical replies can convince the majority

The twenty most common questions about Islam can be answered with reason and logic. A majority of non-Muslims can be convinced with these answers. If a Muslim memorizes or simply remembers these answers, Inshallah he will be successful, if not in convincing non-Muslims about the complete truth of Islam,

then at least in removing misconceptions about Islam and neutralizing the negative thinking about Islam and Muslims that the non-Muslims have. A very few non-Muslims may have counter arguments to these replies, for which further information may be required.

Misconceptions due to media

The common misconceptions about Islam arise in the minds of a majority of non-Muslims, because they are constantly being bombarded with misinformation about Islam. International media is mainly controlled by the western world, whether it is international satellite channels, radio stations, news papers, magazines or books. Recently the Internet has become a powerful medium of information. Though it is not controlled by anybody, one finds a large amount of virulent propaganda about Islam on the Internet. Of course, Muslims too are utilizing this tool to portray the right image of Islam and Muslims, but they are far behind as compared to the propaganda against Islam. I hope the efforts by the Muslims will increase and continue to be pursued.

Misconceptions change with time

The most common questions about Islam are different in different periods and eras. This set of twenty most common questions is based on present times. Decades earlier, the set of questions was different and decades later too, the set of questions may change depending upon how Islam is projected by the media.

Misconceptions are the same throughout the world

I have interacted with people in different parts of the world and have found these twenty most common questions about Islam to be the same everywhere. There may be a couple of additional questions depending upon the locale, the surrounding or culture. For instance in America, the additional common question is - "Why does Islam prohibit taking and giving of interest?"

I have included among these twenty most common questions, certain questions more common among the Indian non-Muslims. For instance, "why do Muslims have non-vegetarian food?" The reason for including such questions is that people of Indian origin are spread throughout the world and constitute about 20% i.e. 1/5th of the world population. Thus, their questions become common questions asked by non-Muslims throughout the world.

Misconceptions of non-Muslims who have studied Islam

There are many non-Muslims who have studied Islam. Most of them have only read books on Islam written by biased critics of Islam. These non-Muslims have an additional set of twenty common misconceptions about Islam. For instance, they claim to have found contradictions in the Qur'an, they contend that the Qur'an is unscientific, etc. There is another set of additional replies clearing these twenty misconceptions among non-Muslims who have studied Islam from distorted sources. I have also given the replies to twenty additional less common questions among the non-Muslims in my public talks and book on "Answers to Common Questions about Islam by Non-Muslims who have some knowledge about Islam".

1. POLYGAMY

Question:

Why is a man allowed to have more than one wife in Islam? i.e. why is polygamy allowed in Islam?

Answer:

1. Definition of Polygamy

Polygamy means a system of marriage whereby one person has more than one spouse. Polygamy can be of two types. One is polygyny where a man marries more than one woman, and the other is polyandry, where a woman marries more than one man. In Islam, limited polygyny is permitted; whereas polyandry is completely prohibited.

Now coming to the original question, why is a man allowed to have more than one wife?

2. The Qur'an is the only religious scripture in the world that says, "marry only one".

The Qur'an is the only religious book, on the face of this earth, that contains the phrase 'marry only one'. There is no other religious book that instructs men to have only one wife. In none of the other religious scriptures, whether it be the Vedas, the Ramayan, the Mahabharat, the Geeta, the Talmud or the Bible does one find a restriction on the number of wives. According to these scriptures one can marry as many as one wishes. It was only later, that the Hindu priests and the Christian Church restricted the number of wives to one.

Many Hindu religious personalities, according to their scriptures, had multiple wives. King Dashrat, the father of Rama, had more than one wife. Krishna had several wives.

In earlier times, Christian men were permitted as many wives as they wished, since the Bible puts no restriction on the number of wives. It was only a few centuries ago that the Church restricted the number of wives to one.

Polygyny is permitted in Judaism. According to Talmudic law, Abraham had three wives, and Solomon had hundreds of wives. The practice of polygyny continued till Rabbi Gershom ben Yehudah (960 C.E to 1030 C.E) issued an edict against it. The Jewish Sephardic communities living in Muslim countries continued the practice till as late as 1950, until an Act of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel extended the ban on marrying more than one wife.

(*Interesting Note:- As per the 1975 census of India **Hindus are more polygynous than Muslims.** The report of the 'Committee of The Status of Woman in Islam', published in 1975 mentions on page numbers 66 and 67 that the percentage of polygamous marriages between the years 1951 and 1961

was 5.06% among the Hindus and only 4.31% among the Muslims. According to Indian law only Muslim men are permitted to have more than one wife. It is illegal for any non-Muslim in India to have more than one wife. Despite it being illegal, Hindus have more multiple wives as compared to Muslims. Earlier, there was no restriction even on Hindu men with respect to the number of wives allowed. It was only in 1954, when the Hindu Marriage Act was passed that it became illegal for a Hindu to have more than one wife. At present it is the Indian Law that restricts a Hindu man from having more than one wife and not the Hindu scriptures.)

Let us now analyse why Islam allows a man to have more than one wife.

3. Qur’an permits limited polygyny

As I mentioned earlier, Qur’an is the only religious book on the face of the earth that says ‘marry only one’. The context of this phrase is the following verse from Surah Nisa of the Glorious Qur’an:

“Marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one.”

[Al-Qur’an 4:3]

Before the Qur’an was revealed, there was no upper limit for polygyny and many men had scores of wives, some even hundreds. Islam put an upper limit of four wives. Islam gives a man permission to marry two, three or four women, only on the condition that he deals justly with them.

In the same chapter i.e. Surah Nisa verse 129 says:

“Ye are never able to be fair and just as between women....”

[Al-Qur’an 4:129]

Therefore polygyny is not a rule but an exception. Many people are under the misconception that it is compulsory for a Muslim man to have more than one wife.

Broadly, Islam has five categories of Do’s and Don’ts:

(i) ‘Fard’ i.e. compulsory or obligatory

(ii) ‘Mustahab’ i.e. recommended or encouraged

(iii) ‘Mubah’ i.e. permissible or allowed

(iv) ‘Makruh’ i.e. not recommended or discouraged

(v) ‘Haraam’ i.e. prohibited or forbidden

Polygyny falls in the middle category of things that are permissible. It cannot be said that a Muslim who has two, three or four wives is a better Muslim as compared to a Muslim who has only one wife.

4. Average life span of females is more than that of males

By nature males and females are born in approximately the same ratio. A female child has more immunity than a male child. A female child can fight the germs and diseases better than the male child. For this reason, during the pediatric age itself there are more deaths among males as compared to the females.

During wars, there are more men killed as compared to women. More men die due to accidents and diseases than women. The average life span of females is more than that of males, and at any given time one finds more widows in the world than widowers.

5. India has more male population than female due to female foeticide and infanticide

India is one of the few countries, along with the other neighbouring countries, in which the female population is less than the male population. The reason lies in the high rate of female infanticide in India, and the fact that more than one million female foetuses are aborted every year in this country, after they are identified as females. If this evil practice is stopped, then India too will have more females as compared to males.

6. World female population is more than male population

In the USA, women outnumber men by 7.8 million. New York alone has one million more females as compared to the number of males, and of the male population of New York one-third are gays i.e sodomites. The U.S.A as a whole has more than twenty-five million gays. This means that these people do not wish to marry women. Great Britain has four million more females as compared to males. Germany has five million more females as compared to males. Russia has nine million more females than males. God alone knows how many million more females there are in the whole world as compared to males.

7. Restricting each and every man to have only one wife is not practical

Even if every man got married to one woman, there would still be more than thirty million females in U.S.A who would not be able to get husbands (considering that America has twenty five million gays). There would be more than four million females in Great Britain, 5 million females in Germany and nine million females in Russia alone who would not be able to find a husband.

Suppose my sister happens to be one of the unmarried women living in USA, or suppose your sister happens to be one of the unmarried women in USA. The only two options remaining for her are that she either marries a man who already has a wife or becomes 'public property'. There is no other option. All those who are modest will opt for the first.

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Most women would nto like to share their husband with other women. But in Islam when the situation deems it really neccessary Muslim women in due faith could bear a small personal loss to prevent a greater loss of letting other Muslim sisters becoming 'public properties'.

8. Marring a married man preferable to becoming 'public property'

In Western society, it is common for a man to have mistresses and/or multiple extra-marital affairs, in which case, the woman leads a disgraceful, unprotected life. The same society, however, cannot accept a man having more than one wife, in which women retain their honourable, dignified position in society and lead a protected life.

Thus the only two options before a woman who cannot find a husband is to marry a married man or to become 'public property'. Islam prefers giving women the honourable position by permitting the first option and disallowing the second.

There are several other reasons, why Islam has permitted limited polygyny, but it is mainly to protect the modesty of women.

2. POLYANDRY

Question:

If a man is allowed to have more than one wife, then why does Islam prohibit a woman from having more than one husband?

Answer:

A lot of people, including some Muslims, question the logic of allowing Muslim men to have more than one spouse while denying the same ‘right’ to women.

Let me first state emphatically, that the foundation of an Islamic society is justice and equity. Allah has created men and women as equal, but with different capabilities and different responsibilities. Men and women are different, physiologically and psychologically. Their roles and responsibilities are different. Men and women are equal in Islam, but not identical.

Surah Nisa’ Chapter 4 verses 22 to 24 gives the list of women with whom Muslim men can not marry. It is further mentioned in Surah Nisa’ Chapter 4 verse 24 “Also (prohibited are) women already married”

The following points enumerate the reasons why polyandry is prohibited in Islam:

1. If a man has more than one wife, the parents of the children born of such marriages can easily be identified. The father as well as the mother can easily be identified. In case of a woman marrying more than one husband, only the mother of the children born of such marriages will be identified and not the father. Islam gives tremendous importance to the identification of both parents, mother and father. Psychologists tell us that children who do not know their parents, especially their father undergo severe mental trauma and disturbances. Often they have an unhappy childhood. It is for this reason that the children of prostitutes do not have a healthy childhood. If a child born of such wedlock is admitted in school, and when the mother is asked the name of the father, she would have to give two or more names! I am aware that recent advances in science have made it possible for both the mother and father to be identified with the help of genetic testing. Thus this point which was applicable for the past may not be applicable for the present.
2. Man is more polygamous by nature as compared to a woman.
3. Biologically, it is easier for a man to perform his duties as a husband despite having several wives. A woman, in a similar position, having several husbands, will not find it possible to perform her duties as a wife. A woman undergoes several psychological and behavioral changes due to different phases of the menstrual cycle.
4. A woman who has more than one husband will have several sexual partners at the same time and has a high chance of acquiring venereal or sexually transmitted diseases which can also be transmitted back to her husband even if all of them have no extra-marital sex. This is not the case in a man having more than one wife, and none of them having extra-marital sex.

The above reasons are those that one can easily identify. There are probably many more reasons why Allah, in His Infinite Wisdom, has prohibited polyandry.

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3. HIJAB FOR WOMEN

Question:

Why does Islam degrade women by keeping them behind the veil?

Answer:

The status of women in Islam is often the target of attacks in the secular media. The 'hijab' or the Islamic dress is cited by many as an example of the 'subjugation' of women under Islamic law. Before we analyze the reasoning behind the religiously mandated 'hijab', let us first study the status of women in societies before the advent of Islam

1. In the past women were degraded and used as objects of lust

The following examples from history amply illustrate the fact that the status of women in earlier civilizations was very low to the extent that they were denied basic human dignity:

a. Babylonian Civilization:

The women were degraded and were denied all rights under the Babylonian law. If a man murdered a woman, instead of him being punished, his wife was put to death.

b. Greek Civilization:

Greek Civilization is considered the most glorious of all ancient civilizations. Under this very 'glorious' system, women were deprived of all rights and were looked down upon. In Greek mythology, an 'imaginary woman' called 'Pandora' is the root cause of misfortune of human beings. The Greeks considered women to be subhuman and inferior to men. Though chastity of women was precious, and women were held in high esteem, the Greeks were later overwhelmed by ego and sexual perversions. Prostitution became a regular practice amongst all classes of Greek society.

c. Roman Civilization:

When Roman Civilization was at the zenith of its 'glory', a man even had the right to take the life of his wife. Prostitution and nudity were common amongst the Romans.

d. Egyptian Civilization:

The Egyptian considered women evil and as a sign of a devil.

e. Pre-Islamic Arabia:

Before Islam spread in Arabia, the Arabs looked down upon women and very often when a female child was born, she was buried alive.

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2. Islam uplifted women and gave them equality and expects them to maintain their status.

Islam uplifted the status of women and granted them their just rights 1400 years ago. Islam expects women to maintain their status.

Hijab for men

People usually only discuss 'hijab' in the context of women. However, in the Glorious Qur'an, Allah (swt) first mentions 'hijab' for men before 'hijab' for the women. The Qur'an mentions in Surah Noor:

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do."

[Al-Qur'an 24:30]

The moment a man looks at a woman and if any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he should lower his gaze.

Hijab for women.

The next verse of Surah Noor, says:

" And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons..."

[Al-Qur'an 24:31]

3. Six criteria for Hijab.

According to Qur'an and Sunnah there are basically six criteria for observing hijab:

1. Extent:

   The first criterion is the extent of the body that should be covered. This is different for men and women. The extent of covering obligatory on the male is to cover the body at least from the navel to the knees. For women, the extent of covering obligatory is to cover the complete body except the face and the hands upto the wrist. If they wish to, they can cover even these parts of the body. Some scholars of Islam insist that the face and the hands are part of the obligatory extent of 'hijab'.

   All the remaining five criteria are the same for men and women.

2. The clothes worn should be loose and should not reveal the figure.
3. The clothes worn should not be transparent such that one can see through them.
4. The clothes worn should not be so glamorous as to attract the opposite sex.
5. The clothes worn should not resemble that of the opposite sex.
6. The clothes worn should not resemble that of the unbelievers i.e. they should not wear clothes that are specifically identities or symbols of the unbelievers' religions.

4. Hijab includes conduct and behaviour among other things

Complete 'hijab', besides the six criteria of clothing, also includes the moral conduct, behaviour, attitude and intention of the individual. A person only fulfilling the criteria of 'hijab' of the clothes is observing 'hijab' in a limited sense. 'Hijab' of the clothes should be accompanied by 'hijab' of the eyes, 'hijab' of the heart, 'hijab' of thought and 'hijab' of intention. It also includes the way a person walks, the way a person talks, the way he behaves, etc.

5. Hijab prevents molestation

The reason why Hijab is prescribed for women is mentioned in the Qur'an in the following verses of Surah Al-Ahzab:

"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad); that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

[Al-Qur'an 33:59]

The Qur'an says that Hijab has been prescribed for the women so that they are recognized as modest women and this will also prevent them from being molested.

6. Example of twin sisters

Suppose two sisters who are twins, and who are equally beautiful, walk down the street. One of them is attired in the Islamic hijab i.e. the complete body is covered, except for the face and the hands up to the wrists. The other sister is wearing western clothes, a mini skirt or shorts. Just around the corner there is a hooligan or ruffian who is waiting for a catch, to tease a girl. Whom will he tease? The girl wearing the Islamic Hijab or the girl wearing the skirt or the mini? Naturally he will tease the girl wearing the skirt or the mini. Such dresses are an indirect invitation to the opposite sex for teasing and molestation. The Qur'an rightly says that hijab prevents women from being molested.

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7. Capital punishment for the rapists

Under the Islamic shariah, a man convicted of having raped a woman, is given capital punishment. Many are astonished at this 'harsh' sentence. Some even say that Islam is a ruthless, barbaric religion! I have asked a simple question to hundreds of non-Muslim men. Suppose, God forbid, someone rapes your wife, your mother or your sister. You are made the judge and the rapist is brought in front of you. What punishment would you give him? All of them said they would put him to death. Some went to the extent of saying they would torture him to death. To them I ask, if someone rapes your wife or your mother you want to put him to death. But if the same crime is committed on somebody else's wife or daughter you say capital punishment is barbaric. Why should there be double standards?

8. Western society falsely claims to have uplifted women

Western talk of women's liberalization is nothing but a disguised form of exploitation of her body, degradation of her soul, and deprivation of her honour. Western society claims to have 'uplifted' women. On the contrary it has actually degraded them to the status of concubines, mistresses and society butterflies who are mere tools in the hands of pleasure seekers and sex marketeers, hidden behind the colourful screen of 'art' and 'culture'.

9. USA has one of the highest rates of rape

United States of America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries of the world. It also has one of the highest rates of rape in any country in the world. According to a FBI report, in the year 1990, every day on an average 1756 cases of rape were committed in U.S.A alone. Later another report said that on an average everyday 1900 cases of rapes are committed in USA. The year was not mentioned. May be it was 1992 or 1993. May be the Americans got 'bolder' in the following years.

Consider a scenario where the Islamic hijab is followed in America. Whenever a man looks at a woman and any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he lowers his gaze. Every woman wears the Islamic hijab, that is the complete body is covered except the face and the hands upto the wrist. After this if any man commits rape he is given capital punishment. I ask you, in such a scenario, will the rate of rape in America increase, will it remain the same, or will it decrease?

10. Implementation of Islamic Shariah will reduce the rate of rapes

Naturally as soon as Islamic Shariah is implemented positive results will be inevitable. If Islamic Shariah is implemented in any part of the world, whether it is America or Europe, society will breathe easier. Hijab does not degrade a woman but uplifts a woman and protects her modesty and chastity.

4. WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY THE SWORD?

Question:

How can Islam be called the religion of peace when it was spread by the sword?

Answer:

It is a common complaint among some non-Muslims that Islam would not have millions of adherents all over the world, if it had not been spread by the use of force. The following points will make it clear, that far from being spread by the sword, it was the inherent force of truth, reason and logic that was responsible for the rapid spread of Islam.

1. Islam means peace.

Islam comes from the root word ‘salaam’, which means peace. It also means submitting one’s will to Allah (swt). Thus Islam is a religion of peace, which is acquired by submitting one’s will to the will of the Supreme Creator, Allah (swt).

2. Sometimes force has to be used to maintain peace.

Each and every human being in this world is not in favour of maintaining peace and harmony. There are many, who would disrupt it for their own vested interests. Sometimes force has to be used to maintain peace. It is precisely for this reason that we have the police who use force against criminals and anti-social elements to maintain peace in the country. Islam promotes peace. At the same time, Islam exhorts it followers to fight where there is oppression. The fight against oppression may, at times, require the use of force. In Islam force can only be used to promote peace and justice.

3. Opinion of historian De Lacy O’Leary.

The best reply to the misconception that Islam was spread by the sword is given by the noted historian De Lacy O’Leary in the book “Islam at the cross road” (Page 8):

“History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myth that historians have ever repeated.”

4. Muslims ruled Spain for 800 years.

Muslims ruled Spain for about 800 years. The Muslims in Spain never used the sword to force the people to convert. Later the Christian Crusaders came to Spain and wiped out the Muslims. There was not a single Muslim in Spain who could openly give the adhan, that is the call for prayers.

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5. 14 million Arabs are Coptic Christians.

Muslims were the lords of Arabia for 1400 years. For a few years the British ruled, and for a few years the French ruled. Overall, the Muslims ruled Arabia for 1400 years. Yet today, there are 14 million Arabs who are Coptic Christians i.e. Christians since generations. If the Muslims had used the sword there would not have been a single Arab who would have remained a Christian.

6. More than 80% non-Muslims in India.

The Muslims ruled India for about a thousand years. If they wanted, they had the power of converting each and every non-Muslim of India to Islam. Today more than 80% of the population of India are non-Muslims. All these non-Muslim Indians are bearing witness today that Islam was not spread by the sword.

7. Indonesia and Malaysia.

Indonesia is a country that has the maximum number of Muslims in the world. The majority of people in Malaysia are Muslims. May one ask, “Which Muslim army went to Indonesia and Malaysia?”

8. East Coast of Africa.

Similarly, Islam has spread rapidly on the East Coast of Africa. One may again ask, if Islam was spread by the sword, “Which Muslim army went to the East Coast of Africa?”

9. Thomas Carlyle.

The famous historian, Thomas Carlyle, in his book “Heroes and Hero worship”, refers to this misconception about the spread of Islam: “The sword indeed, but where will you get your sword? Every new opinion, at its starting is precisely in a minority of one. In one man’s head alone. There it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it, there is one man against all men. That he takes a sword and try to propagate with that, will do little for him. You must get your sword! On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can.”

10. No compulsion in religion.

With which sword was Islam spread? Even if Muslims had it they could not use it to spread Islam because the Qur’an says in the following verse:

“Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error”

[Al-Qur’an 2:256]

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11. Sword of the Intellect.

It is the sword of intellect. The sword that conquers the hearts and minds of people. The Qur'an says in Surah Nahl, chapter 16 verse 125:

"Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious."

[Al-Qur'an 16:125]

12. Increase in the world religions from 1934 to 1984.

An article in Reader's Digest 'Almanac', year book 1986, gave the statistics of the increase of percentage of the major religions of the world in half a century from 1934 to 1984. This article also appeared in 'The Plain Truth' magazine. At the top was Islam, which increased by 235%, and Christianity had increased only by 47%. May one ask, which war took place in this century which converted millions of people to Islam?

13. Islam is the fastest growing religion in America and Europe.

Today the fastest growing religion in America is Islam. The fastest growing religion in Europe in Islam. Which sword is forcing people in the West to accept Islam in such large numbers?

14. Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson.

Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson rightly says, "People who worry that nuclear weaponry will one day fall in the hands of the Arabs, fail to realize that the Islamic bomb has been dropped already, it fell the day MUHAMMED (pbuh) was born".

5. MUSLIMS ARE FUNDAMENTALISTS AND TERRORISTS

Question:

Why are most of the Muslims fundamentalists and terrorists?

Answer:

This question is often hurled at Muslims, either directly or indirectly, during any discussion on religion or world affairs. Muslim stereotypes are perpetuated in every form of the media accompanied by gross misinformation about Islam and Muslims. In fact, such misinformation and false propaganda often leads to discrimination and acts of violence against Muslims. A case in point is the anti-Muslim campaign in the American media following the Oklahoma bomb blast, where the press was quick to declare a 'Middle Eastern conspiracy' behind the attack. The culprit was later identified as a soldier from the American Armed Forces.

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Let us analyze this allegation of 'fundamentalism' and 'terrorism':

1. Definition of the word 'fundamentalist'

A fundamentalist is a person who follows and adheres to the fundamentals of the doctrine or theory he is following. For a person to be a good doctor, he should know, follow, and practise the fundamentals of medicine. In other words, he should be a fundamentalist in the field of medicine. For a person to be a good mathematician, he should know, follow and practise the fundamentals of mathematics. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of mathematics. For a person to be a good scientist, he should know, follow and practise the fundamentals of science. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of science.

2. Not all 'fundamentalists' are the same

One cannot paint all fundamentalists with the same brush. One cannot categorize all fundamentalists as either good or bad. Such a categorization of any fundamentalist will depend upon the field or activity in which he is a fundamentalist. A fundamentalist robber or thief causes harm to society and is therefore undesirable. A fundamentalist doctor, on the other hand, benefits society and earns much respect.

3. I am proud to be a Muslim funda-mentalist

I am a fundamentalist Muslim who, by the grace of Allah, knows, follows and strives to practise the fundamentals of Islam. A true Muslim does not shy away from being a fundamentalist. I am proud to be a fundamentalist Muslim because, I know that the fundamentals of Islam are beneficial to humanity and the whole world. There is not a single fundamental of Islam that causes harm or is against the interests of the human race as a whole. Many people harbour misconceptions about Islam and consider several teachings of Islam to be unfair or improper. This is due to insufficient and incorrect knowledge of Islam. If one critically analyzes the teachings of Islam with an open mind, one cannot escape the fact that Islam is full of benefits both at the individual and collective levels.

4. Dictionary meaning of the word 'fundamentalist'

According to Webster's dictionary 'fundamentalism' was a movement in American Protestanism that arose in the earlier part of the 20th century. It was a reaction to modernism, and stressed the infallibility of the Bible, not only in matters of faith and morals but also as a literal historical record. It stressed on belief in the Bible as the literal word of God. Thus fundamentalism was a word initially used for a group of Christians who believed that the Bible was the verbatim word of God without any errors and mistakes.

According to the Oxford dictionary 'fundamentalism' means 'strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam'.

Today the moment a person uses the word fundamentalist he thinks of a Muslim who is a terrorist.

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5. Every Muslim should be a terrorist

Every Muslim should be a terrorist. A terrorist is a person who causes terror. The moment a robber sees a policeman he is terrified. A policeman is a terrorist for the robber. Similarly every Muslim should be a terrorist for the antisocial elements of society, such as thieves, dacoits and rapists. Whenever such an anti-social element sees a Muslim, he should be terrified. It is true that the word 'terrorist' is generally used for a person who causes terror among the common people. But a true Muslim should only be a terrorist to selective people i.e. anti-social elements, and not to the common innocent people. In fact a Muslim should be a source of peace for innocent people.

6. Different labels given to the same individual for the same action, i.e. 'terrorist' and 'patriot'

Before India achieved independence from British rule, some freedom fighters of India who did not subscribe to non-violence were labeled as terrorists by the British government. The same individuals have been lauded by Indians for the same activities and hailed as 'patriots'. Thus two different labels have been given to the same people for the same set of actions. One is calling him a terrorist while the other is calling him a patriot. Those who believed that Britain had a right to rule over India called these people terrorists, while those who were of the view that Britain had no right to rule India called them patriots and freedom fighters.

It is therefore important that before a person is judged, he is given a fair hearing. Both sides of the argument should be heard, the situation should be analyzed, and the reason and the intention of the person should be taken into account, and then the person can be judged accordingly.

7. Islam means peace

Islam is derived from the word 'salaam' which means peace. It is a religion of peace whose fundamentals teach its followers to maintain and promote peace throughout the world.

Thus every Muslim should be a fundamentalist i.e. he should follow the fundamentals of the Religion of Peace: Islam. He should be a terrorist only towards the antisocial elements in order to promote peace and justice in the society.

6. EATING NON-VEGETARIAN FOOD

Question:

Killing an animal is a ruthless act. Why then do Muslims consume non-vegetarian food?

Answer:

'Vegetarianism' is now a movement the world over. Many even associate it with animal rights. Indeed, a large number of people consider the consumption of meat and other non-vegetarian products to be a violation of animal rights.

Islam enjoins mercy and compassion for all living creatures. At the same time Islam maintains that Allah has created the earth and its wondrous flora and fauna for the benefit of mankind. It is upto mankind to use every resource in this world judiciously, as a niyamat (Divine blessing) and amanat (trust) from Allah.

Let us look at various other aspects of this argument.

1. A Muslim can be a pure vegetarian

A Muslim can be a very good Muslim despite being a pure vegetarian. It is not compulsory for a Muslim to have non-vegetarian food.

2. Qur'an permits Muslims to have non-vegetarian food

The Qur'an, however permits a Muslim to have non-vegetarian food. The following Qur'anic verses are proof of this fact:

"O ye who believe! Fulfil (all) obligations. Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals with the exceptions named."

[Al-Qur'an 5:1]

"And cattle He has created for you (men): from them Ye derive warmth, and numerous benefits, And of their (meat) ye eat."

[Al-Qur'an 16:5]

"And in cattle (too) ye have an instructive example: From within their bodies We produce (milk) for you to drink; there are, in them, (besides), numerous (other) benefits for you; and of their (meat) ye eat."

[Al-Qur'an 23:21]

3. Meat is nutritious and rich in complete protein

Non-vegetarian food is a good source of excellent protein. It contains biologically complete protein i.e. all the 8 essential amino acid that are not synthesized by the body and should be supplied in the diet. Meat also contains iron, vitamin B1 and niacin.

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4. Humans have Omnivorous set of teeth

If you observe the teeth of herbivorous animals like the cow, goat and sheep, you will find something strikingly similar in all of them. All these animals have a set of flat teeth i.e. suited for herbivorous diet. If you observe the set of teeth of the carnivorous animals like the lion, tiger, or leopard, they all have a set of pointed teeth i.e. suited for a carnivorous diet. If you analyze the set of teeth of humans, you find that they have flat teeth as well as pointed teeth. Thus they have teeth suited for both herbivorous as well as carnivorous food i.e. they are omnivorous. One may ask, if Almighty God wanted humans to have only vegetables, why did He provide us also with pointed teeth? It is logical that He expected us to need and to have both vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian food.

5. Human beings can digest both vege-tarian and non-vegetarian food

The digestive system of herbivorous animals can digest only vegetables. The digestive system of carnivorous animals can digest only meat. But the digestive system of humans can digest both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. If Almighty God wanted us to have only vegetables then why did He give us a digestive system that can digest both vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian food?

6. Hindu scriptures give permission to have non-vegetarian food

a. There are many Hindus who are strictly vegetarian. They think it is against their religion to consume non-vegetarian food. But the true fact is that the Hindu scriptures permit a person to have meat. The scriptures mention Hindu sages and saints consuming non-vegetarian food.

b. It is mentioned in Manu Smruti, the law book of Hindus, in chapter 5 verse 30

> "The eater **who eats the flesh** of those to be eaten **does nothing bad**, even if he does it day after day, for God himself created some to be eaten and some to be eater."

c. Again next verse of Manu Smruti, that is, chapter 5 verse 31 says

> "**Eating meat is right** for the sacrifice, this is traditionally known as a rule of the gods."

d. Further in Manu Smruti chapter 5 verse 39 and 40 says

> "God himself created sacrificial animals for sacrifice, ... , therefore **killing in a sacrifice is not killing**."

e. Mahabharata Anushashan Parva chapter 88 narrates the discussion between Dharmaraj Yudhishthira and Pitamah Bhishma about what food one should offer to Pitris (ancestors) during the Shraddha (ceremony of dead) to keep them satisfied. Paragraph reads as follows:

“Yudhishthira said, “O thou of great puissance, tell me what that object is which, if dedicated to the Pitiris (dead ancestors), become inexhaustible! What Havi, again, (if offered) lasts for all time? What, indeed, is that which (if presented) becomes eternal?”

“Bhishma said, “Listen to me, O Yudhishthira, what those Havis are which persons conversant with the rituals of the Shraddha (the ceremony of dead) regard as suitable in view of Shraddha and what the fruits are that attach to each. With sesame seeds and rice and barely and Masha and water and roots and fruits, if given at Shraddhas, the pitris, O king, remain gratified for the period of a month. With **fishes** offered at Shraddhas, the pitris remain gratified for a period of two months. With the **mutton** they remain gratified for three months and with the hare for four months, with the **flesh of the goat** for five months, with the **bacon (meat of pig)** for six months, and with the **flesh of birds** for seven. With venison obtained from those **deer** that are called Prishata, they remaingratified for eight months, and with that obtained from the Ruru for nine months, and with the **meat of Gavaya** for ten months, With the **meat of the bufffalo** their gratification lasts for eleven months. With **beef** presented at the Shraddha, their gratification, it is said , lasts for a full year. Payasa mixed with ghee is as much acceptable to the pitris as beef. With the **meat of Vadhrinasa (a large bull)** the gratification of pitris lasts for twelve years. the **flesh of rhinoceros**, offered to the pitris on anniversaries of the lunar days on which they died, becomes inexhaustible. The potherb called Kalaska, the petals of kanchana flower, and **meat of (red) goat** also, thus offered, prove inexhaustible.

So but natural if you want to keep your ancestors satisfied forever, you should serve them the meat of red goat.

7. Hinduism was influenced by other religions

Though Hindu Scriptures permit its followers to have non-vegetarian food, many Hindus adopted the vegetarian system because they were influenced by other religions like Jainism.

8. Even plants have life

Certain religions have adopted pure vegetarianism as a dietary law because they are totally against the killing of living creatures. If a person can survive without killing any living creature, I would be the first person to adopt such a way of life. In the past people thought plants were lifeless. Today it is a universal fact that even plants have life. Thus their logic of not killing living creatures is not fulfilled even by being a pure vegetarian.

9. Even plants can feel pain

They further argue that plants cannot feel pain, therefore killing a plant is a lesser crime as compared to killing an animal. Today science tells us that even plants can feel pain. But the cry of the plant cannot be heard by the human being. This is due to the inability of the human ear to hear sounds that are not in the audible range i.e. 20 Hertz to 20,000 Hertz. Anything below and above this range cannot be heard by a human being. A dog can hear up to 40,000 Hertz. Thus there are silent dog whistles that have a frequency of more than 20,000 Hertz and less than 40,000 Hertz. These whistles are only heard by dogs and not by human beings. The dog recognizes the masters whistle and comes to the master. There was research done by a farmer in U.S.A. who invented an instrument which converted the cry of the plant so that it could be heard by human beings. He was able to realize immediately when the plant itself cried for water. Latest researches show that the plants can even feel happy and sad. It can also cry.

10. Killing a living creature with two senses less is not a lesser crime

Once a vegetarian argued his case by saying that plants only have two or three senses while the animals have five senses. Therefore killing a plant is a lesser crime than killing an animal. Suppose your brother is born deaf and dumb and has two senses less as compared to other human beings. He becomes mature and someone murders him. Would you ask the judge to give the murderer a lesser punishment because your brother has two senses less? In fact you would say that he has killed a masoom, an innocent person, and the judge should give the murderer a greater punishment.

In fact the Qur'an says:

"O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good"

[Al-Qur'an 2:168]

11. Over population of cattle

If every human being was a vegetarian, it would lead to overpopulation of cattle in the world, since their reproduction and multiplication is very swift. Allah (swt) in His Divine Wisdom knows how to maintain the balance of His creation appropriately. No wonder He has permitted us to have the meat of the cattle.

12. Cost of meat is reasonable since all aren't non-vegetarians

I do not mind if some people are pure vegetarians. However they should not condemn non-vegetarians as ruthless. In fact if all Indians become non-vegetarians then the present non-vegetarians would be losers since the prices of meat would rise.

7. ISLAMIC METHOD OF SLAUGHTERING ANIMALS APPEARS RUTHLESS

Question:

Why do Muslims slaughter the animal in a ruthless manner by torturing it and slowly and painfully killing it?

Answer:

The Islamic method of slaughtering animals, known as Zabiha has been the object of much criticism from a large number of people.

One may consider the following points, which prove that the Zabiha method is not only humane but also scientifically the best:

1. Islamic method of slaughtering animal

Zakkaytum is a verb derived from the root word Zakah (to purify). Its infinitive is Tazkiyah which means purification. The Islamic mode of slaughtering an animal requires the following conditions to be met:

a. Animal should be slaughtered with sharp object (knife)

The animal has to be slaughtered with a sharp object (knife) and in a fast way so that the pain of slaughter is minimised.

b. Cut wind pipe, throat and vessels of neck

Zabiha is an Arabic word which means 'slaughtered'. The 'slaughtering' is to be done by cutting the throat, windpipe and the blood vessels in the neck causing the animal's death without cutting the spinal cord.

c. Blood should be drained

The blood has to be drained completely before the head is removed. The purpose is to drain out most of the blood which would serve as a good culture medium for micro organisms. The spinal cord must not be cut because the nerve fibres to the heart could be damaged during the process causing cardiac arrest, stagnating the blood in the blood vessels.

2. Blood is a good medium for germs and bacteria

Blood is a good media of germs, bacteria, toxins, etc. Therefore the Muslim way of slaughtering is more hygienic as most of the blood containing germs, bacteria, toxins, etc. that are the cause of several diseases are eliminated.

3. Meat remains fresh for a longer time

Meat slaughtered by Islamic way remains fresh for a longer time due to deficiency of blood in the meat as compared to other methods of slaughtering.

4. Animal does not feel pain

The swift cutting of vessels of the neck disconnects the flow of blood to the nerve of the brain responsible for pain. Thus the animal does not feel pain. While dying, the animal struggles, writhers, shakes and kicks, not due to pain, but due to the contraction and relaxation of the muscles defecient in blood and due to the flow of blood out of the body.

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8. NON-VEGETARIAN FOOD MAKES MUSLIMS VIOLENT

Question:

Science tell us that whatever one eats, it has an effect on one's behaviour. Why then, does Islam allow Muslims to eat non-vegetarian food, since eating of animals could make a person violent and ferocious?

Answer:

1. Only eating of herbivorous animals allowed

I agree that, what a person eats has an effect on his behaviour. This is one of the reasons why Islam prohibits the eating of carnivorous animals like lion, tiger, leopard, etc. who are violent and ferocious. The consumption of the meat of such animals would probably make a person violent and ferocious. Islam only allows the eating of herbivorous animals like cow, goat, sheep, etc. that are peaceful and docile. Muslims eat peaceful and docile animals because Muslims are peace loving and non-violent people.

2. The Qur'an says Prophet prohibits what is bad

The Qur'an says:

"The Prophet commands them what is just and prohibits what is evil". "He allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them what is bad (and impure),"

[Al-Qur'an 7: 157]

"So take what the Messenger assigns to you and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you."

[Al-Qur'an 59: 7]

For a Muslim, the Prophet's statement is sufficient to convince him that Allah does not wish humans to eat some kinds of meat while allowing some other kinds.

3. Hadith of Mohammad (pbuh) prohibi-ting eating of carnivorous animals

According to various authentic Ahadith narrated in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim including hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas in Sahih Muslim, Book of hunting and slaughter, Hadith No. 4752 and Sunan Ibn-I-Majah chapter 13 Hadith no. 3232 to 3234, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) prohibited the eating of:

(i) Wild animals with canine teeth, i.e. meat eating carnivorous animals. These are animals belonging to the cat families such as lion, tiger, cats, dogs, wolfs, hyenas, etc.

(ii) Certain rodents like mice, rats, rabbits with claws, etc.

(iii) Certain reptiles like snakes, alligators, etc.

(iv) Birds of prey with talons or claws, like vultures, eagle, crows, owl, etc.

There is no scientific evidence that proves beyond doubt that eating non-vegetarian food makes one violent.

9. MUSLIMS WORSHIP THE KAABA

Question:

When Islam is against idol worship why do the Muslims worship, and bow down to the Kaaba in their prayer?

Answer:

Kaaba is the Qibla i.e. the direction Muslims face during their prayers. It is important to note that though Muslims face the Kaaba during prayers, they do not worship the Kaaba. Muslims worship and bow to none but Allah.

It is mentioned in Surah Baqarah:

"We see the turning of thy face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall We turn thee to a Qiblah that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction." ***[Al-Qur'an 2:144]***

1. Islam believes in fostering unity

For instance, if Muslims want to offer Salaah (Prayer), it is possible that some may wish to face north, while some may wish to face south. In order to unite Muslims in their worship of the One True God, Muslims, wherever they may be, are asked to face in only one direction i.e. towards the Kaaba. If some Muslims live towards the west of the Kaaba they face the east. Similarly if they live towards the east of the Kaaba they face the west.

2. Kaaba is at the Centre of the World Map

The Muslims were the first people to draw the map of the world. They drew the map with the south facing upwards and north downwards. The Kaaba was at the centre. Later, western cartographers drew the map upside down with the north facing upwards and south downwards. Yet, Alhamdullilah the Kaaba is at the centre of the world map.

3. Tawaf around Kaaba for indicating one God

When the Muslims go to Masjid-e-Haram in Makkah, they perform tawaf or circumambulation round the Kaaba. This act symbolizes the belief and worship of One God, since, just as every circle has one centre, so also there is only one Allah (swt) worthy of worship.

4. Hadith of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him)

Regarding the black stone, hajr-e-aswad, there is a hadith (tradition), attributed to the illustrious companion of the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh), Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

According to Sahih Bukhari, Volume 2, book of Hajj, chapter 56, H.No. 675. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I know that you are a stone and can neither benefit nor harm. Had I not seen the Prophet (pbuh) touching (and kissing) you, I would never have touched (and kissed) you".

5. People stood on Kaaba and gave the adhaan

At the time of the Prophet, people even stood on the Kaaba and gave the 'adhaan' or the call to prayer. One may ask those who allege that Muslims worship the Kaaba; which idol worshipper stands on the idol he worships?

10. NON-MUSLIMS NOT ALLOWED IN MAKKAH

Question:

Why are non-Muslims not allowed in the Holy cities of Makkah and Madinah?

Answer:

It is true that non-Muslims are not allowed in the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, by law. The following points will serve to elucidate the possible reasoning behind such a restriction.

1. All citizens are not permitted in the cantonment area

I am a citizen of India. Yet, I am not permitted to enter certain restricted areas like the cantonment. In every country there are certain areas where a common citizen of that country cannot enter. Only a citizen who is enrolled in the military or those who are connected with the defence of the country are allowed in the cantonment area. Similarly Islam is a Universal Religion for the entire world and for all human beings. The cantonment areas of Islam are the two holy cites of Makkah and Madinah. Here only those who believe in Islam and are involved in the defence of Islam i.e. the Muslims are allowed.

It would be illogical for a common citizen to object against the restriction on entering a cantonment area. Similarly it is not appropriate for non-Muslims to object against the restriction on non-Muslims against entering Makkah and Madinah.

2. Visa to enter Makkah and Madinah

a. Whenever a person travels to a foreign country he has to first apply for a visa i.e. the permission to enter that country. Every country has its own rules, regulations and requirements for issuing a visa. Unless their critera are satisfied they will not issue a visa.

b. One of the countries which is very strict in issuing a visa is the United States of America, especially when issuing visas to citizens of the third world. They have several conditions and requirements to be fulfilled before they issue a visa.

c. When I visited Singapore, it was mentioned on their immigration form - death to drug traffickers. If I want to visit Singapore I have to abide by the rules. I cannot say that death penalty is a barbaric punishment. Only if I agree with their requirements and conditions will I be permitted to enter the country.

d. The Visa – The primary condition required for any human being to enter Makkah or Madina is to say with his lips, La ila ha illallah Muhammed ur Rasulullah meaning that 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammed (pbuh) is His Messenger.'

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11. PORK FORBIDDEN

Question:

Why is the eating of pork forbidden in Islam?

Answer:

The fact that consumption of pork is prohibited in Islam is well known. The following points explain various aspects of this prohibition:

1. Pork prohibited in Qur'an

The Qur'an prohibits the consumption of pork in no less than 4 different places. It is prohibited in 2:173, 5:3, 6:145 and 16:115.

"Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah."

[Al-Qur'an 5:3]

The above verses of the Holy Qur'an are sufficient to satisfy a Muslim as to why pork is forbidden.

2. Pork prohibited in the Bible

The Christian is likely to be convinced by his religious scriptures. The Bible prohibits the consumption of pork, in the book of Leviticus

"And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you".

"Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch, they are unclean to you." ***[Leviticus 11:7-8]***

Pork is also prohibited in the Bible in the book of Deuteronomy

"And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you. Ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcass." ***[Deuteronomy 14:8]***

A similar prohibition is repeated in the Bible in the book of Isaiah chapter 65 verse 2-5.

3. Consumption of pork causes several diseases

The other non-Muslims and atheists will agree only if convinced through reason, logic and science. Eating of pork can cause no less than seventy different types of diseases. A person can have various helminthes like roundworm, pinworm, hookworm, etc. One of the most dangerous is Taenia Solium, which is in lay man's terminology called tapeworm. It harbours in the intestine and is very long. Its ova i.e. eggs, enter the blood stream and can reach almost all the organs of the body. If it enters the brain it can cause memory loss. If it enters the heart it can cause heart attack, if it enters the eye it can cause blindness, if it enters the liver it can cause liver damage. It can damage almost all the organs of the body. Another dangerous helminthes is Trichura Tichurasis.

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A common misconception about pork is that if it is cooked well, these ova die. In a research project undertaken in America, it was found that out of twenty-four people suffering from Trichura Tichurasis, twenty two had cooked the pork very well. This indicates that the ova present in the pork do not die under normal cooking temperature.

4. Pork has fat building material

Pork has very little muscle building material and contains excess of fat. This fat gets deposited in the vessels and can cause hypertension and heart attack. It is not surprising that over 50% of Americans suffer from hypertension.

5. Pig is one of the filthiest animals on earth

The pig is one of the filthiest animals on earth. It lives and thrives on muck, faeces and dirt. It is the best scavenger that I know that God has produced. In the villages they don't have modern toilets and the villagers excrete in the open air. Very often excreta is cleared by pigs.

Some may argue that in advanced countries like Australia, pigs are bred in very clean and hygienic conditions. Even in these hygienic conditions the pigs are kept together in sties. No matter how hard you try to keep them clean they are filthy by nature. They eat and enjoy their own as well as their neighbour's excreta.

6. Pig is the most shameless animal

The pig is the most shameless animal on the face of the earth. It is the only animal that invites its friends to have sex with its mate. In America, most people consume pork. Many times after dance parties, they have swapping of wives; i.e. many say "you sleep with my wife and I will sleep with your wife." If you eat pigs then you behave like pigs.

12. PROHIBITION OF ALCOHOL

Question:

Why is the consumption of alcohol prohibited in Islam?

Answer:

Alcohol has been the scourge of human society since time immemorial. It continues to cost countless human lives, and causes terrible misery to millions throughout the world. Alcohol is the root cause of several problems facing society. The statistics of soaring crime rates, increasing instances of mental illnesses and millions of broken homes throughout the world bear mute testimony to the destructive power of alcohol.

1. Prohibition of alcohol in the Qur'an

The Glorious Qur'an prohibits the consumption of alcohol in the following verse:

"O ye who believe! Intoxicants and Gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an Abomination – of Satan's handiwork; eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper." ***[Al-Qur'an 5:90]***

2. Prohibition of alcohol in the Bible

The Bible prohibits the consumption of alcohol in the following verses:

a. **"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."** ***[Proverbs 20:1]***

b. **"And be not drunk with wine."** ***[Ephesians 5:18]***

3. Alcohol inhibits the inhibitory centre

The human beings possess an inhibitory centre in their brains. This inhibitory centre prevents the person from doing things that he considers wrong. For instance a person does not normally use abusive language while addressing his parents or elders. If he has to answer the call of nature, his inhibitory centre will prevent him from doing so in public. Therefore he uses the toilet.

When a person consumes alcohol, the inhibitory centre itself is inhibited. That is precisely the reason that an inebriated person is often found to be indulging in behaviour that is completely uncharacteristic of him. For instance the intoxicated person is found to use abusive and foul language and does not realize his mistake even if he is addressing his parents. Many even urinate in their clothes. Neither do they talk nor walk properly. They even misbehave.

4. Cases of adultery, rape, incest and AIDS are found more among alcoholics

According to National Crime Victimization Survey Bureau of Justice (U.S. Department of Justice) in the year 1996 alone everyday on an average 2,713 rapes took place. The statistics tell us that the majority of the rapists, were intoxicated while committing the crime. The same is true in cases of molestation.

According to statistics, 8% of Americans commit incest i.e. one in every twelve to thirteen persons in America is involved in incest. Almost all the cases of incest are due to intoxication of one or both the persons involved.

One of the major factors associated with the spread of AIDS, the most dreaded disease, is alcoholism.

5. Every alcoholic was initially a social drinker

Many may argue in favour of liquor by calling themselves 'social drinkers'. They claim that they only have one or two pegs and they have self-control and so never get intoxicated. Investigations reveal that every alcoholic started as a social drinker. Not a single alcoholic or drunkard initially starts drinking with the intention of becoming an alcoholic or a drunkard. No social drinker can say that I have been having alcohol for several years and that I have so much self-control that I have never been intoxicated even a single time.

6. If a person is intoxicated just once and commits something shameful, it will remain with him for a lifetime.

Suppose a 'social drinker' loses his self-control just once. In a state of intoxication he commits rape or incest. Even if the act is later regretted, a normal human being is likely to carry the guilt throughout his life. Both the perpetrator and the victim are irreparably and irreversibly damaged.

7. Alcohol is prohibited in the Hadith

The Prophet of Islam Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

a. In Sunan Ibn-I-Majah Volume 3, Book of Intoxicants, Chapter 30 Hadith No. 3371.

   "Alcohol is the mother of all evils and it is the most shameful of evils."

b. In Sunan Ibn-I-Majah Volume 3, Book of Intoxicants, Chapter 30 Hadith No. 3392

   "Anything which intoxicates in a large quantity, is prohibited even in a small quantity."

   Thus there is no excuse for a nip or a tot.

c. Not only those who drink alcohol are cursed but also those who deal with them directly or indirectly are cursed by Allah.

   According to Sunan Ibn-I-Majah Volume 3, Book of Intoxicants, Chapter 30 Hadith No. 3380.

It was reported by Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

"God's curse falls on ten groups of people who deal with alcohol. The one who distills it, the one for whom it has been distilled, the one who drinks it, the one who transports it, the one to who it has been brought, the one whom serves it, the one who sells it, the one who utilizes money from it, the one who buys it and the one who buys it for someone else."

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8. Diseases associated with alcoholism

There are several scientific reasons for the prohibition of consumption of intoxicants i.e. alcohol. The maximum number of deaths in the world related to any one particular cause is due to the consumption of alcohol. Millions of people die every year only because of intake of alcohol. I need not go into the details of all the ill-effects of alcohol since most of them are commonly known. Below is a simple list of few of the alcohol related illnesses:

1. Cirrhosis of Liver is the most well known alcohol associated disease.
2. Others are Cancer of Oesophagus, Cancer of Head and Neck, Cancer of Liver (Hepatoma), Cancer of Bowel, etc.
3. Oesophagitis, Gastritis, Pancreatitis and Hepatitis are linked with alcohol consumption.
4. Cardiomyopathy, Hypertension, Coronary Artherosclerosis, Angina and Heart Attacks are linked with heavy alcohol intakes.
5. Strokes, Apoplexy, Fits and different types of Paralysis are linked with alcohol intake.
6. Peripheral Neuropathy, Cortical Atrophy, Cerebellar Atrophy are well-known syndromes caused by alcohol consumption.
7. Wernicke – Korsakoff syndrome with amnesia of recent events, confabulations and retainment of memory to old events with different types of paralysis are mainly due to thiamine deficiency due to excessive alcohol intake.
8. Beriberi and other deficiencies are not uncommon among alcoholics. Even Pellagra occurs in alcoholics.
9. Delerium Tremens is a serious complication that may occur during recurrent infection of alcoholics or post operatively. It also occurs during abstention as a sign of withdrawal effect. It is quite serious and may cause death even if treated in well equipped centres.
10. Numerous Endocrine Disorders have been associated with alcoholism ranging from Myxodema to Hyperthyroidism and Florid Cushing Syndrome.
11. Hematological ill effects are long and variable. Folic acid deficiency, however, is the most common manifestation of alcoholic abuse resulting in Macrocytic Anemia. Zeive's syndrome is a triad of Hemolytic Anemia, Jaundice and Hyperlipaedemia that follows alcoholic binges.
12. Thrombocytopenia and other platelet abnormalities are not rare in alcoholics.
13. The commonly used tablet metronidazole (flagyl) interacts badly with alcohol.

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14. Recurrent infection is very common among chronic alcoholics. The resistance to disease and the immunological defense system are compromised by alcohol intake.
15. Chest infections are notorious in alcoholics. Pneumonia, Lung Abcess, Emphysema and Pulmonary Tuberculosis are all common in alcoholics.
16. During acute alcoholic intoxication, the drunk person usually vomits, the cough reflexes which are protective are paralysed. The vomitus thus easily pass to the lung causing Pneumonia or Lung Abscess. Occasionally it may even cause suffocation and death.
17. The ill effects of alcohol consumption on women deserves special mention. Females are more vulnerable to alcohol-related Cirrhosis than men. During pregnancy alcohol consumption has a severe detrimental effect on the foetus. Foetal Alcohol Syndrome is being recognised more and more in the medical profession.
18. Skin diseases are also related to alcohol indulgence.
19. Eczema, Alopecia, Nail Dystrophy, Paronychia (infection around the nails) and Angular Stomatitis (inflammation of the angle of the mouth) are common diseases among alcoholics.

9. Alcoholism is a 'disease'

Medical doctors have now turned liberal towards alcoholics and call alcoholism a disease rather than an addiction.

The Islamic Research Foundation has published a pamphlet that says:

If alcohol is a disease, it is the only disease that:

- Is sold in bottles
- Is advertised in newspapers, magazines, on radio and television
- Has licensed outlets to spread it
- Produces revenue for the government
- Brings violent deaths on the highways
- Destroys family life and increases crime
- Has no germs or viral cause

ALCOHOLISM IS NOT A DISEASE – IT IS SATAN'S HANDIWORK

Allah (swt) in His Infinite Wisdom has warned us against this snare of Satan. Islam is called the "Deen-ul-Fitrah" or the natural religion of Man. All its injunctions are aimed at preserving the natural state of man. Alcohol is a deviation from this natural state, for the individual as well as for society. It degrades man to a level below that of the beasts he claims to be superior to. Hence the consumption of alcohol is prohibited in Islam.

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13. EQUALITY OF WITNESSES

Question:

Why are two witnesses who are women, equivalent to only one witness who is a man ?

Answer:

1. Two female witnesses not always considered equal to one male witness

There are no less than three verses in the Qur'an which speak about witnesses without specifying man or woman.

a) While making a will of inheritance, two just persons are required as witnesses. In Surah Maidah chapter 5 verse 106, the Glorious Qur'an says:

"Oh you who believe! When death approaches any of you, (take) witnesses among yourself when making bequests,– two just persons of your own (brotherhood) or others from outside if you are journeying through the earth and the chance of death befalls you." ***[Al-Qur'an 5:106]***

b) Two persons endued with justice in case of talaq.

"And take for witness two persons from among you, endued with justice, and establish the evidence (as) before Allah". ***[Al-Qur'an 65:2]***

c) Four witnesses are required in case of charge against chaste women

"And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegatios) flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence even after: for such men are wicked transgressors"

[Al-Qur'an 24:4]

2. Two female witnesses is equal to male witness only in financial transaction

It is not true that two female witnesses are always considered as equal to only one male witness. It is true only in certain cases. There are about five verses in the Qur'an that mention witnesses, without specifying male or female. There is only one verse in the Qur'an, that says two female witnesses are equal to one male witness. This verse is Surah Baqarah, chapter 2 verse 282. This is the longest verse in the Qur'an and deals with financial transactions. It says:

"Oh! ye who believe! When ye deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligation in a fixed period of time reduce them to writing and get two witnesses out of your own men and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as ye choose, for witnesses so that if one of them errs the other can remind her." ***[Al-Qur'an 2:282]***

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This verse of the Qur'an deals only with financial transactions. In such cases, it is advised to make an agreement in writing between the parties and take two witnesses, preferably both of which should be men only. In case you cannot find two men, then one man and two women would suffice.

For instance, suppose a person wants to undergo an operation for a particular ailment. To confirm the treatment, he would prefer taking references from two qualified surgeons. In case he is unable to find two surgeons, his second option would be one surgeon and two general practitioners who are plain MBBS doctors.

Similarly in financial transactions, two men are preferred. Islam expects men to be the breadwinners of their families. Since financial responsibility is shouldered by men, they are expected to be well versed in financial transactions as compared to women. As a second option, the witness can be one man and two women, so that if one of the women errs the other can remind her. The Arabic word used in the Qur'an is 'Tazil' which means 'confused' or 'to err'. Many have wrongly translated this word as 'to forget'. Thus financial transactions constitute the only case in which two female witnesses are equal to one male witness.

3. Two female witnesses equal to one male witness even in the case of murder

However, some scholars are of the opinion that the feminine attitude can also have an effect on the witness in a murder case. In such circumstances a woman is more terrified as compared to a man. Due to her emotional condition she can get confused. Therefore, according to some jurists, even in cases of murder, two female witnesses are equivalent to one male witness. In all other cases, one female witness is equivalent to one male witness. In all other cases, one female witness is equivalent to one male witness.

4. Qur'an clearly specifies that one female witness equal to one male witness

There are some scholars who are of the opinion that the rule of two female witnesses equal to one male witness should be applied to all the cases. This cannot be agreed upon because one particular verse of the Qur'an from Surah Noor chapter 24, verse 6 clearly equates one female witness and one male witness:

"And those who launch a charge against their spouses, and have (in support) no evidence but their own - their solitary evidence can be received." ***[Al-Qur'an 24:6]***

5. Solitary witness of Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her) is sufficient for Hadith to be accepted

Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her) the wife of the beloved Prophet has narrated no less than 2220 Ahadith which are considered authentic only on her solitary evidence. This is sufficient proof that one witness of a women can also be accepted.

Many jurists agree that even one witness of a woman is sufficient for the sighting of the crescent of the moon. Imagine one woman witness is sufficient for one of the pillars of Islam, i.e. fasting and the whole Muslim community of men and women agree and accept her witness! Some jurists say that one witness is required at the beginning of Ramadaan and two witnesses at the end of Ramadaan. It makes no difference whether the witnesses are men or women.

6. Female witnesses are preferred in some cases

Some incidents require only female witness and that of a male cannot be accepted. For instance, in dealing with the problems of women, while giving the burial bath i.e. 'ghusl' to a woman, the witness has to be a woman.

The seeming inequality of male and female witnesses in financial transactions is not due to any inequality of the sexes in Islam. It is only due to the different natures and roles of men and women in society as envisaged by Islam.

14. INHERITANCE

Question:

Under Islamic law, why is a woman's share of the inherited wealth only half that of a man?

Answer:

1. Inheritance in the Qur'an

The Glorious Qur'an contains specific and detailed guidance regarding the division of the inherited wealth, among the rightful beneficiaries.

The Qur'anic verses that contain guidance regarding inheritance are:

* Surah Baqarah, chapter 2 verse 180
* Surah Baqarah, chapter 2 verse 240
* Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 7-9
* Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 19
* Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 33 and
* Surah Maidah, chapter 5 verse 106-108

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2. Specific share of inheritance for the relatives

There are three verses in the Qur'an that broadly describe the share of close relatives i.e. Surah Nisah chapter 4 verses 11, 12 and 176. The translation of these verses are as follows:

"Allah (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females, if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; If only one, her share is a half.

For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; If no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers (or sisters) the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all cases is) after the payment of legacies and debts. Ye know not whether your parents or your children are nearest to you in benefit. These are settled portions ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

In what your wives leave, your share is half. If they leave no child; but if they leave a child, ye get a fourth; after payment of legacies and debts. In what ye leave, their share is a fourth, if ye leave no child; but if ye leave a child, they get an eight; after payment of legacies and debts. If the man or woman whose inheritance is in question, has left neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left a brother or a sister, each one of the two gets a sixth; but if more than two, they share in a third; after payment of legacies and debts; so that no loss is caused (to anyone). Thus it is ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing Most Forbearing"

[Al-Qur'an 4:11-12]

"They ask thee for a legal decision. Say: Allah directs (them) about those who leave no descendants or ascendants as heirs. If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child, she shall have half the inheritance. If (such a deceased was) a woman who left no child, Her brother takes her inheritance. If there are two sisters, they shall have two thirds of the inheritance (between them). If there are brothers and sisters, (they share), the male having twice the share of the female. Thus doth Allah (swt) makes clear to you (His knowledge of all things).

[Al-Qur'an 4:176]

3. Female some times inherits same or more than male counter part

In most of the cases, a woman inherits half of what her male counterpart inherits. However, this is not always the case. In case the deceased has left no ascendant or descendent but has left the uterine brother and sister, each of the two inherit one sixth.

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If the deceased has left children, both the parents that is mother and father get an equal share and inherit one sixth each. In certain cases, a woman can also inherit a share that is double that of the male. If the deceased is a woman who has left no children, brothers or sisters and is survived only by her husband, mother and father, the husband inherits half the property while the mother inherits one third and the father the remaining one sixth. In this particular case, the mother inherits a share that is double that of the father.

4. Female usually inherits half the share of that of the male counter part

It is true that as a general rule, in most cases, the female inherits a share that is half that of the male. For instance in the following cases:

1. daughter inherits half of what the son inherits,
2. wife inherits 1/8th and husband 1/4th if the deceased has no children.
3. Wife inherits 1/4th and husband 1/2 if the deceased has children
4. If the deceased has no ascendant or descendent, the sister inherits a share that is half that of the brother.

5. Male inherits double than the female because he financially supports the family

In Islam a woman has no financial obligation and the economical responsibility lies on the shoulders of the man. Before a woman is married it is the duty of the father or brother to look after the lodging, boarding, clothing and other financial requirements of the woman. After she is married it is the duty of the husband or the son. Islam holds the man financially responsible for fulfilling the needs of his family. In order to do be able to fulfill the responsibility the men get double the share of the inheritance. For example, if a man dies leaving about Rs. One Hundred and Fifty Thousand, for the children (i.e one son and one daughter) the son inherits One Hundred Thousand rupees and the daughter only Fifty Thousand rupees. Out of the one hundred thousand which the son inherits, as his duty towards his family, he may have to spend on them almost the entire amount or say about eighty thousand and thus he has a small percentage of inheritance, say about twenty thousand, left for himself. On the other hand, the daughter, who inherits fifty thousand is not bound to spend a single penny on anybody. She can keep the entire amount for herself. Would you prefer inheriting one hundred thousand rupees and spending eighty thousand from it, or inheriting fifty thousand rupees and having the entire amount to yourself?

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15. IS THE QUR'AN GOD'S WORD?

Question

How can you prove that the Qur'an is the word of God?

Answer

(to be corrected and provided after a few days)

* approximately 5 pages

16. HEREAFTER - LIFE AFTER DEATH

Question

How can you prove the existence of hereafter, i.e. life after death?

Answer

1. Belief in the hereafter is not based on blind faith?

Many people wonder as to how a person with a scientific and logical temperament, can lend any credence to the belief of life after death. People assume that anyone believing in the hereafter is doing so on the basis of blind belief.

My belief in the hereafter is based on a logical argument.

2. Hereafter a logical belief

There are more than a thousand verses in the Glorious Qur'an, containing scientific facts (refer my book "Qur'an and Modern Science-Compatible or Incompatible?"). Many facts mentioned in the Qur'an have been discovered in the last few centuries. But science has not advanced to a level where it can confirm every statement of the Qur'an.

Suppose 80% of all that is mentioned in the Qur'an has been proved 100% correct. About the remaining 20%, science makes no categorical statement, since it has not advanced to a level, where it can either prove or disprove these statements. With the limited knowledge that we have, we cannot say for sure whether even a single percentage or a single verse of the Qur'an from this 20% portion is wrong. Thus when 80% of the Qur'an is 100% correct and the remaining 20% is not disproved, logic says that even the 20% portion is correct. The existence of the hereafter, which is mentioned in the Qur'an, falls in the 20% ambiguous portion which my logic says is correct.

3. Concept of peace and human values is useless without the concept of hereafter

Is robbing a good or an evil act? A normal balanced person would say it is evil. How would a person who does not believe in the hereafter convince a powerful and influential criminal that robbing is evil?

Suppose I am the most powerful and influential criminal in the world. At the same time I am an Intelligent and a logical person. I say that robbing is good because it helps me lead a luxurious life. Thus robbing is good for me.

If anybody can put forward a single logical argument as to why it is evil for me, I will stop immediately. People usually put forward the following arguments:

a. The person who is robbed will face difficulties

Some may say that the person who is robbed will face difficulties. I certainly agree that it is bad for the person who is robbed. But it is good for me. If I rob a thousand dollars, I can enjoy a good meal at a 5 star restaurant.

b. Some one may rob you

Some people argue that someday I may be robbed. No one can rob me because I am a very powerful criminal and I have hundreds of bodyguards. I can rob anybody but nobody can rob me. Robbing may be a risky profession for a common man but not for an influential person like me.

c. The police may arrest you

Some may say, if you rob, you can be arrested by the police. The police cannot arrest me because I have the police on my payroll. I have the ministers on my payroll. I agree that if a common man robs, he will be arrested and it will be bad for him, but I am an extraordinarily influential and powerful criminal.

Give me one logical reason why it is bad for me and I will stop robbing.

d. Its easy money

Some may say its easy money and not hard-earned money. I agree completely that it is easy money, and that is one of the main reasons why I rob. If a person has the option of earning money the easy as well as the hard way, any logical person would choose the easy way.

e. It is against humanity

Some may say it is against humanity and that a person should care for other human beings. I counter argue by asking as to who wrote this law called 'humanity' and why should I follow it?

This law may be good for the emotional and sentimental people but I am a logical person and I see no benefit in caring for other human beings.

f. It is a selfish act

Some may say that robbing is being selfish. It is true that robbing is a selfish act; but then why should I not be selfish? It helps me enjoy life.

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1. No logical reason for robbing being an evil act

Hence all arguments that attempt to prove that robbing is an evil act are futile. These arguments may satisfy a common man but not a powerful and influential criminal like me. None of the arguments can be defended on the strength of reason and logic. It is no surprise that there are so many criminals in this world.

Similarly raping, cheating etc. can be justified as good for a person like me and there is no logical argument that can convince me that these things are bad.

2. A Muslim can convince a powerful and influential criminal

Now let us switch sides. Suppose you are the most powerful and influential criminal in the world, who has the police and the ministers on his payroll. You have army of thugs to protect you. I am a Muslim who will convince you that robbing, raping, cheating, etc. are evil acts.

Even if I put forth the same arguments to prove that robbing is evil the criminal will respond the same way as he did earlier.

I agree that the criminal is being logical and all his arguments are true only when he is the most powerful and influential criminal.

3. Every human being wants justice

Each and every human being desires justice. Even if he does not want justice for others he wants justice for himself. Some people are intoxicated by power and influence and inflict pain and suffering on others. The same people, however, would surely object if some injustice was done to them. The reason such people become insensitive to the suffering of others is that they worship power and influence. Power and influence, they feel, not only allows them to inflict injustice on others but also prevents others from doing likewise to them.

4. God is Most Powerful and Just

As a Muslim I would convince the criminal about the existence of Almighty God (refer to answer proving the existence of God). This God is more powerful than you and at the same time is also just. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Allah is never unjust in the least degree"

[Al-Qur'an 4:40]

5. Why does God not punish me?

The criminal, being a logical and scientific person, agrees that God exists, after being presented with scientific facts from the Qur'an. He may argue as to why God, if He is Powerful and Just, does not punish him.

6. The people who do injustice should be punished

Every person who has suffered injustice, irrespective of financial or social status, almost certainly wants the perpetrator of injustice to be punished. Every normal person would like the robber or the rapist to be taught a lesson. Though a large number of criminals are punished, many even go scot-free. They lead a pleasant, luxurious life, and even enjoy a peaceful existence. If injustice is done to a powerful and influential person, by someone more powerful and more influential than he, even such a person would want that person perpetrators of injustice to be punished.

7. This life is a test for the hereafter

This life is a test for the hereafter. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"He who created Deathand life that He may try which of you is best in deed; and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving"

[Al-Qur'an 67:2]

8. Final justice on day of judgement

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Every soul shall have a taste of death: and only on the Day of Judgement shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have attained the object (of life): for the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception."

[Al-Qur'an 3:185]

Final justice will be meted out on the Day of Judgement. After a person dies, he will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement along with the rest of mankind. It is possible that a person receives part of his punishment in this world. The final reward and punishment will only be in the hereafter. God Almighty may not punish a robber or a rapist in this world but he will surely be held accountable on the Day of Judgement and will be punished in the hereafter i.e. life after death.

9. What punishment can the human law give Hitler?

Hitler incinerated six million Jews during his reign of terror. Even if the police had arrested him, what punishment can the human law give Hitler for justice to prevail? The most they can do is to send Hitler to the gas chamber. But that will only be punishment for the killing of one Jew. What about the remaining five million, nine hundred and ninety nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine Jews?

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10. Allah can burn Hitler more than six million times in hellfire

Allah say in the Glorious Qur'an:

"Those who reject Our signs, We shall sooncast into the Fire;as often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the penalty: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise"

[Al-Qur'an 4:56]

If Allah wishes he can incinerate Hitler six million times in the hereafter in the hellfire.

11. No concept of human values or good and bad without concept of hereafter

It is clear that without convincing a person about the hereafter, i.e. life after death, the concept of human values and the good or evil nature of acts is impossible to prove to any person who is doing injustice especially when he is influential and powerful.

17. WHY ARE MUSLIMS DIVIDED INTO SECTS / DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT?

Question:

When all the Muslim follow one and the same Qur'an then why are there so many sects and different schools of thoughts among Muslims?

Answer:

1. Muslims Should be United

It is a fact that Muslims today, are divided amongst themselves. The tragedy is that such divisions are not endorsed by Islam at all. Islam believes in fostering unity amongst its followers.

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves;" ***[Al-Qur'an 3:103]***

Which is the rope of Allah that is being referred to in this verse? It is the Glorious Qur'an. The Glorious Qur'an is the rope of Allah which all Muslims should hold fast together. There is double emphasis in this verse. Besides saying 'hold fast all together' it also says, 'be not divided'.

Qur'an further says,

"Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger" ***[Al-Qur'an 4:59]***

All the Muslim should follow the Qur'an and authentic ahadith and be not divided among themselves.

2. It is Prohibited to make sects and divisions in Islam

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"As for those who divide Their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least: Their affair is with Allah: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did." ***[Al-Qur'an 6:159]***

In this verse Allah (swt) says that one should disassociate oneself from those who divide their religion and break it up into sects.

But when one asks a Muslim, "who are you?", the common answer is either 'I am a Sunni, or 'I am Shia'. Some call themselves Hanafi, or Shafi or Maliki or Humbali. Some say 'I am a Deobandi', while some others say 'I am a Barelvi'.

3. Our Prophet was a Muslim

One may ask such Muslims, "Who was our beloved prophet (pbuh)? Was he a Hanafi or a Shafi, or a Humbali or a Maliki?" No! He was a Muslim, like all the other prophets and messengers of Allah before him.

It is mentioned in chapter 3 verse 52 of Al-Qur'an that Jesus (pbuh) was a Muslim.

Further, in chapter 3 verse 67, Al-Qur'an says that Ibrahim (pbuh) was not a Jew or a Christian but was a Muslim.

4. Qur'an says call yourselves Muslim

a. If anyone poses a Muslim the question who are you, he should say "I am a MUSLIM, not a Hanafi or a Shafi". Surah Fussilat chapter 41 verse 33 says

"Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness, and says, 'I am of those Who bow in Islam (Muslim)?' "
[Al-Qur'an 41:33]

The Qur'an says "Say I am of those who bow in Islam". In other words, say, "I am a Muslim".

b. The Prophet (pbuh) dictated letters to non-Muslim kings and rulers inviting them to accept Islam. In these letters he mentioned the verse of the Qur'an from Surah Ali Imran chapter 3 verse 64:

Say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)."
[Al-Qur'an 3:64]

5. Respect all the Great Scholars of Islam

We must respect all the great scholars of Islam, including the four Imaams, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi, Imam Humbal and Imam Malik (may Allah be pleased with them all). They were great scholars and may Allah reward them for their research and hardwork. One can have no objection if someone agrees with the views and research of Imam Abu Hanifa or Imam Shafi, etc. But when posed a question, 'who are you?', the reply should only be 'I am a Muslim'.

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Some may argue by quoting the hadith of our beloved Prophet from Sunan Abu Dawood Hadith No. 4579. In this hadith the prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, "My community will be split up into seventy-three sects."

This hadith reports that the prophet predicted the emergence of seventy-three sects. He did not say that Muslims should be active in dividing themselves into sects. The Glorious Qur'an commands us not to create sects. Those who follow the teachings of the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith, and do not create sects are the people who are on the true path.

According to Tirmidhi Hadith No. 171, the prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, "My Umma will be fragmented into seventy-three sects, and all of them will be in Hell fire except one sect." The companions asked Allah's messenger which group that would be. Where upon he replied, "It is the one to which I and my companions belong."

The Glorious Qur'an mentions in several verses, "Obey Allah and obey His Messenger". A true Muslim should only follow the Glorious Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith. He can agree with the views of any scholar as long as they conform to the teachings of the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith. If such views go against the Word of Allah, or the Sunnah of His Prophet, then they carry no weight, regardless of how learned the scholar might be.

If only all Muslims read the Qur'an with understanding and adhere to Sahih Hadith, Inshallah most of these differences would be solved and we could be one united Muslim Ummah.

18. ALL RELIGIONS TEACH PEOPLE TO BE RIGHTEOUS, THEN WHY FOLLOW ONLY ISLAM?

Question

All religions basically teach followers to do good deeds. Why should a person only follow Islam? Can he not follow any of the religions?

Answer

1. Major difference between Islam and most other religions

All religions basically exhort mankind to be righteous and eschew evil. But Islam goes beyond that. It guides us towards practical ways of achieving righteousness and eliminating evil from our individual and collective lives. Islam takes into account human nature and the complexities of human society. Islam is guidance from the Creator Himself. Therefore, Islam is also called the Deen-ul-Fitrah (the natural religion of Man).

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2. Example - Islam commands us to shun robbery and also prescribes method of eli-minating robbery

a. Islam prescribes method of eliminating robbery

All major religions teach that theft is an evil act. Islam teaches the same. So what is the difference between Islam and the other religions? The difference lies in the fact that Islam, besides teaching that robbing is evil, shows a practical way of creating a social structure in which people will not rob.

b. Islam prescribes Zakat

Islam prescribes a system of Zakat (obligatory annual charity). Islamic law prescribes that every person who has a saving that exceeds the nisab level i.e. more than 85 grams of gold, should give 2.5% of that saving every lunar year in charity. If every rich person in the world gave Zakat sincerely, poverty will be eradicated from this world. Not a single human being would die of hunger.

c. Chopping off the hands as punishment for robbery

Islam prescribes chopping off the hands of the convicted robber. The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Maidah:

"As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands:a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime: and Allah is Exalted in power, full of wisdom." ***[Al-Qur'an 5:38]***

The non-Muslim may say, "Chopping off the hands in this 20th century. Islam is a barbaric and ruthless religion!"

d. Results achieved when Islamic Shariah Implemented

America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries in the world. Unfortunately it also has one of the highest rates of crime, theft, and robbery. Suppose the Islamic shariah is implemented in America i.e. every rich person gives Zakat (2.5% of his savings in charity above 85 grams of gold every lunar year), and every convicted robber has his or her hands chopped off as a punishment. Will the rate of theft and robbery in America increase, remain same or decrease? Naturally it will decrease. Moreover the existence of such a stringent law would discourage many a potential robber.

I agree that the amount of theft that takes place in the world today is so tremendous that if you chop off the hands of all the thieves, there will be tens of thousands of people whose hands will be chopped off. The point here is that the moment you implement this law the rate of theft will decline immediately. The potential robber would give it a serious thought before jeopardizing his limbs. The mere thought of the punishment itself will discourage majority of the robbers. There will barely be a few who would rob. Hence only a few person's hands would be chopped off but millions would live peacefully without fear of being robbed.

Islamic Shariah is therefore practical, and achieves results.

3. Example: Islam prohibits the molestation and rape of women. It enjoins hijab and prescribes capital punishment for a convicted rapist.

a. Islam prescribes method of eliminating molestation and rape

All the major religions declare the molestation and rape of women as grave sins. Islam teaches the same. What then is the difference between Islam and the other religions? The difference lies in the fact that Islam does not merely preach respect for women, or abhor molestation and rape as serious crimes, but also gives clear guidance as to how society can eliminate such crimes.

b. Hijab for men

Islam has a system of hijab. The Glorious Qur'an first mentions hijab for the men and then for the women. Hijab for the men is mentioned in the following verse:

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do." ***[Al-Qur'an 24:30]***

The moment a man looks at a woman and if any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he should lower his gaze.

c. Hijab for women

Hijab for women is mentioned in the following verse:

"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons...."

[Al-Qur'an 24:31]

The extent of hijab for a woman is that her complete body should be covered. The only part that can be seen, are the face and the hands up to the wrists. If they wish to cover, they can even cover these parts of the body. However some Islamic scholars insist that even the face should be covered.

d. Hijab prevents molestation

The reason why Allah has prescribed Hijab for the women is given in the Qur'an in the folowing verse of Surah Al-Ahzab:

"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women,that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful."

[Al-Qur'an 33:59]

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The Qur'an says that Hijab has been prescribed for the women so that they are recognized as modest women this would prevent them from being molested.

e. Example of twin sisters

Suppose two sisters who are twins and who are equally beautiful, walk down a street. One of them is wearing the Islamic Hijab i.e. the complete body is covered except for the face and the hands up to the wrists, and the other twin is wearing a mini skirt or shorts. Around the corner there is a hooligan who is waiting for an opportunity to tease a girl. Who will he tease? The girl wearing the Islamic Hijab or the girl wearing the mini skirt or shorts? Dresses that expose more than they conceal, are an indirect temptation to the opposite sex for teasing, molestation and rape. The Qur'an rightly says that the hijab prevents women from being molested.

f. Capital punishment for rapist

The Islamic shariah prescribes capital punishment for a convicted rapist. The non-Muslim may be horrified at such a stringent punishment in this age. Many accuse Islam of being ruthless and barbaric. I have asked a common question to hundreds of non-Muslim men. Suppose God-forbid, some one rapes your wife, your mother or your sister and you are made the judge. The rapist is brought in front of you. What punishment would you give him? All of them said, "we would put him to death." Some went to the extent of saying, "we would torture him to death", If your wife or your mother is raped you want the rapist to be put to death. But if someone else's wife or mother is raped, capital punishment is a barbaric law. Why the double standards?

g. U.S.A. has one of the highest rate of Rape

The United States of America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries of the world. An F.B.I report in the year 1990 says that 1,02,555 cases of rape were reported. It further says that only 16% of the cases of rapes are reported. Thus, in order to know the actual number of rapes that took place in 1990, the reported figure should be multiplied by 6.25. We get a total of 6,40,968 rape cases that took place in the year 1990. If the total is divided by 365 the number of days in a year, we get an average of 1,756 rape incidents everyday.

Later another report said that an average of 1900 cases of rape are committed in U.S.A every day. According to National Crime Victimization Survey Bureau of Justice Statistics (U. S. Dept. of Justice) in 1996 alone 3,07,000 cases of rape were reported. Only 31% of the actual cases of rape were reported. Thus, 3,07,000 X 3.226 = 9,90,322 rapes took place in 1996. That is, an average of 2,713 cases of rape took place everyday in America in 1996. Every 32 seconds one rape is taking place in America. Maybe American rapists got bolder. The FBI report of 1990 continues and says that out of the rape cases that were reported only 10% of the rapist were

arrested, that is only 1.6% of the actual rapes committed. Out of those arrested, 50% were let free before the trial. This would mean that only 0.8% of the rapists faced a trial. In other words if a person commits 125 rapes the chances that he will get a punishment for rape is only once. Many would consider this a good gamble. And the report says that of those people who faced trial 50% received sentences of less than a year's imprisonment though the American law says rape carries a seven year sentence of imprisonment. For a rapist, the judge is lenient to first time offenders. Imagine a person commits 125 rapes and the chances of being convicted is only once, and 50% of the time the judge will grant leniency and give a sentence of less than a year!

h. Results achieved when Islamic Shariah Implemented

Suppose the Islamic shariah is implemented in America. Whenever a man looks at a woman and if any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he lowers his gaze. Every woman wears the Islamic Hijab, that is the complete body is covered except the face and the hands upto the wrists. After this if any man commits rape, he gets capital punishment. The question is, will the rate of rape in America increase, will it remain the same or will it decrease? Naturally it will decrease. Islamic Shariah gets results.

4. Islam has Practical Solutions for the Problems of Mankind

Islam is the best way of life because its teachings are not doctrinaire rhetoric but practical solutions for the problems of mankind. Islam achieves results both at the individual and collective levels. Islam is the best way of life because it is a practical, universal religion not confined to any ethnic group or nationality.

19. VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ISLAM AND THE ACTUAL PRACTICE OF MUSLIMS

Question:

If Islam is the best religion, why are many of the Muslims dishonest, unreliable, and involved in activities such as cheating, bribing, dealing in drugs, etc.?

Answer:

1. Media maligns Islam

a. Islam is without doubt the best religion but the media is in the hands of the westerners who are afraid of Islam. The media is continuously broadcasting and printing information against Islam. They either provide misinformation about Islam, misquote Islam or project a point out of proportion, if any.

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b. When any bomb blasts take place anywhere, the first people to be accused without proof are invariably the Muslims. This appears as headlines in the news. Later, when they find that non-Muslims were responsible, it appears as an insignificant news' item.

c. If a 50 year old Muslim marries a 15 year old girl after taking her permission, it appears on the front page but when a 50 year old non-Muslim rapes a 6 year old girl, it may appear in the news in the inside pages as 'Newsbriefs'. Everyday in America on an average 2,713 cases of rape take place but it doesn't appear in the news, since it has become a way of life for the Americans.

2. Black sheep in every community:

I am aware that there are some Muslims who are dishonest, unreliable, who cheat, etc. but the media projects this as though only Muslims are involved in such activities. There are black sheep in every community. I know Muslims who are alcoholics and who can drink most of the non-Muslims under the table.

3. Muslims best as a whole:

Inspite of all the black sheep in the Muslim community, Muslims taken on the whole, yet form the best community in the world. We are the biggest community of tee-totallers as a whole, i.e. those who don't imbibe alcohol. Collectively, we are a community which gives the maximum charity in the world. There is no community as a whole in the world which can show even a candle to the Muslims where modesty is concerned; where sobriety is concerned; where human values and ethics are concerned.

4. Don't judge a car by its driver:

If you want to judge how good is the latest model of the "Mercedes" car and a person who does not know how to drive sits at the steering wheel and bangs up the car, who will you blame? The car or the driver? But naturally, the driver. To analyze how good the car is, a person should not look at the driver but see the ability and features of the car. How fast is it, what is its average fuel consumption, what are the safety measures, etc. Even if I agree for the sake of argument that the Muslims are bad, we can't judge Islam by its followers? If you want to judge how good Islam is then judge it according to its authentic sources, i.e. the Glorious Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith.

5. Judge Islam by its best follower i.e. Prophet Mohammed (pbuh):

If you practically want to check how good a car is put an expert driver behind the steering wheel. Similarly the best and the most exemplary follower of Islam by whom you can check how good Islam is, is the last and final messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Besides Muslims, there are several honest and unbiased non-Muslim historians who have acclaimed that prophet Muhammad was the best human being. According to Michael H. Hart who wrote the book, 'The Hundred Most Influential Men in History', the topmost position, i.e. the number one position goes to the beloved prophet of Islam, Muhammad (pbuh). There are several such examples of non-Muslims paying great tributes to the prophet, like Thomas Carlyle, La-Martine, etc.

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20. NON-MUSLIMS REFERRED AS KAFIRS

Question:

Why do Muslims abuse non-Muslims by calling them Kafirs?

Answer:

Kafir means one who rejects.

'Kafir' is derived from the word 'kufr', which means to conceal or to reject. In Islamic terminology, 'Kafir' means one who conceals or rejects the truth of Islam and a person who rejects Islam is in English called a 'non-Muslim'.

If a 'non-Muslim' considers being called a 'non-Muslim' or 'Kafir', which are one and the same, an abuse, it is due to his misunderstanding about Islam. He or she needs to reach out to proper sources of understanding Islam and Islamic terminology, and not only will he not feel abused but appreciate Islam in the proper perspective.